

Funeral show not funereal

By **ANGIE WAGNER**
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LAS VEGAS — While some funeral directors tried out the latest gurneys, others ran their hands over steel coffins and fingered the cotton linings — ahhh, soft.

It was enough to give you a few shivers, but gloomy or not, the National Funeral Directors Association's trade show here this week has attracted more than 6,000 undertakers.

Lightweight vaults, spiffier hearses, embalming chemicals and decorative urns filled the exhibit hall as sellers displayed their dreary wares.

"I think we have the best casket line," Bill Wilcock, president of The York Group, Inc., said Monday.

Wilcock said the Houston company's new compact display of coffins is a breakthrough for funeral homes, which often lack enough space for every coffin available.

In York's display, partial caskets fit into a makeshift wall with drawers featuring the available linings. Because so many caskets are on one wall, with the prices clearly in sight, Wilcock believes families planning funerals will feel more comfortable.



LENNOX MCLENDON/The Associated Press

Groundbreaking display: Bill Wilcock, president of Houston-based York Group, Inc., presents a compact coffin display Oct. 7 at the National Funeral Directors Association's trade show in Las Vegas. The display is being touted as a breakthrough for funeral homes, which typically don't have enough space for every coffin.

"It's like Home Depot, when I buy a drill — good, better, best," he said, pointing to the different prices of steel caskets.

York decided to display the caskets closed because people seem to be put off when viewing a large, open casket.

How about a nice pair of coffin cufflinks?

"They're a little squeamish at first," said Anthony Kim, referring to his potential cus-

tomers when they first see the tiny coffins that open to reveal a figure.

Kim's Durham, N.C.-based company, Precious Prints, Inc., manufactures the "world's smallest casket" in 18-karat gold.

Using a mold, Kim also makes a loved one's fingerprint into necklaces and pendants.

"I did it for the living (survivors)," he said.

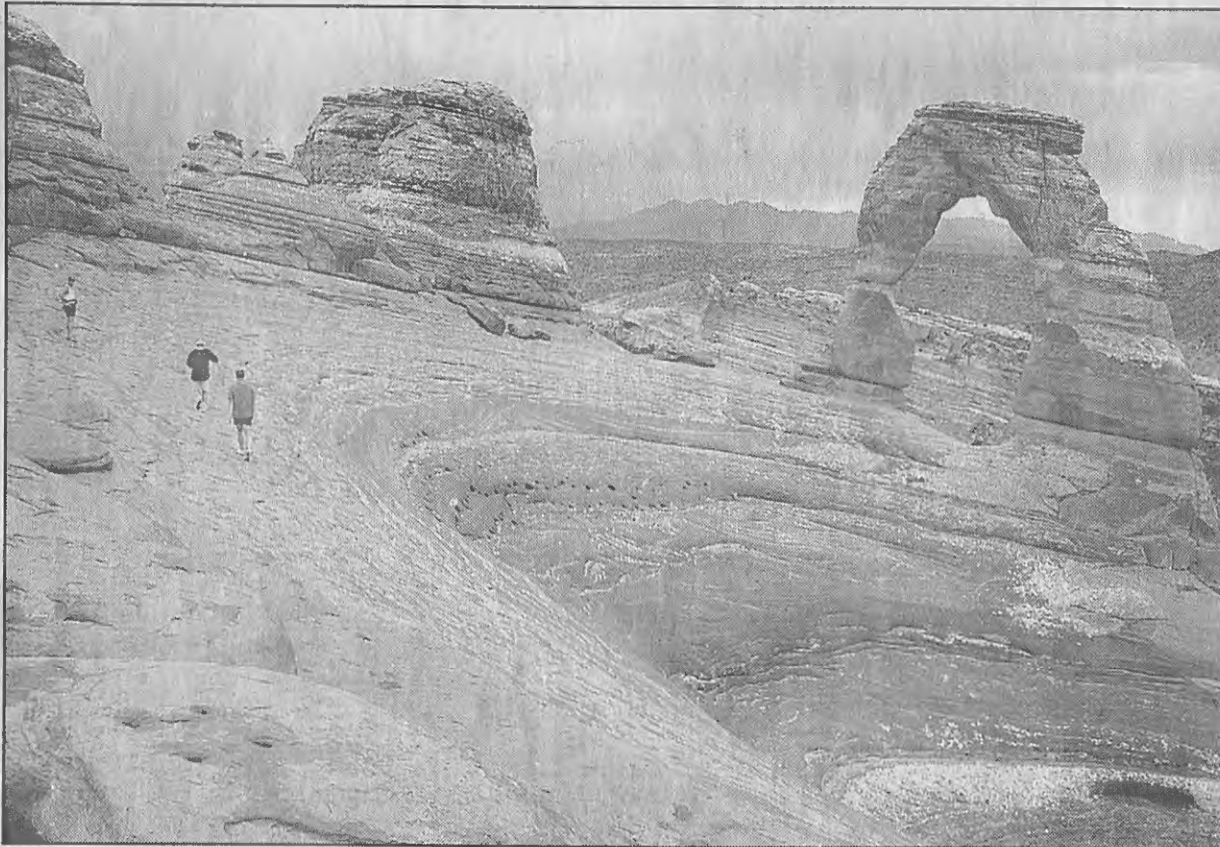
Leif Technologies, Inc. believes Viewlogy, a visual eulogy electronically stored and then installed in a grave marker, will give some identity to dark headstones.

For \$1,300 to \$5,500, the company will customize a biography complete with pictures and information provided by the family. Protected by a bronze cover, the battery-operated unit is installed right into

a grave marker or urn. The computer is activated by a magnet when the cover is opened.

A sample biography reads, "I was born on a farm outside of Bristol, Conn., during a blinding snowstorm ..."

"A lot of people like to go through cemeteries and they wonder about people's lives," said Deac Manross, president of the Lebanon, Ohio, company.



MARC LESTER/The Daily Herald

Bigger Arches: Hikers enjoy Delicate Arch at Arches National Park last month. The park may grow if Congress approves a bill sponsored by Rep. Chris Cannon, R-Utah.

Arches expansion bill moves

House subcommittee approves Cannon's bill to add 3,140 acres

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A Congressional subcommittee has given its approval to expanding the boundaries of Arches National Park to include Lost Springs Canyon.

The inclusion of the area would add 3,140 acres to the park. Rep. Chris Cannon, R-Utah, the bill's sponsor, said the

The House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands approved the bill by a voice vote Tuesday after it received praise from both Committee Chairman Jim Hansen, R-Utah, and ranking Democrat Del. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, D-American Samoa.

of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The House ultimately passed the bill.

Cannon told the Deseret News that his bill is not nearly as controversial as the bill involving the Grand Staircase-Escalante.

But Scott Groene of the

Court says state's interests outweigh rights of parents

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A federal appeals court Tuesday came down on the side of government in a Utah case that pitted parental rights against the responsibility of government to investigate child abuse.

Applying terms of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the court said that Washington County had a "traditional" and "transcendent interest" in protecting children within the county from abuse.

The case stems from an eyewitness' allegations of sexual abuse of a 7-year-old child.

The county had adopted a policy to question alleged victims of child abuse at school outside the presence of parents. But in this case, the child was home-schooled.

So, Washington County officials received a court order to remove the child from her home and uniformed officers took her to shelter home for questioning. After 18 hours away from home, the child was returned to her home after the investigation revealed no evidence of child abuse.

The mother, identified only as J.B., then filed a lawsuit against Washington County, alleging violations of her and her daughter's rights to procedural due

from the Rutherford Institute (a national conservative, non-profit civil liberties organization), the mother appealed to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver.

The 32-page opinion indicates the three-judge appeals panel clearly struggled with the issues raised by the case.

Writing for the court, Judge Robert Henry said, "This is a difficult case, pitting the fundamental rights of parents and families — rights that are 'consonant with the right of privacy' — against the awesome responsibilities of a county to investigate child abuse, a most reprehensible and ever-increasing problem."

But, while conceding a risk of separating the family in error, the judges said there was also an enormous risk of tainting the interview with the child or leaving the child in an abusive situation.

They noted that the mother, J.B., admitted that if officers had simply asked to interview her daughter the mother "wouldn't say yes." That "belies" her claim that officials should have requested permission to conduct the interview in the home, the judges said.

They also rejected J.B.'s